

East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, November 17, 2009

Hanaford School Cafeteria

200 Middle Road

East Greenwich, RI 02818

ANY ITEMS ON THE AGENDA MAY BE SUBJECT TO A VOTE

The regular session of the East Greenwich School Committee was called to order at 7:15 p.m. by the Chair Jean Ann Guiliano. Those in attendance were: Anne Palumbo - Vice Chair; Mary Ellen Winters, Susan Records, Deidre Gifford and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Victor Mercurio.

Those not in attendance: Paul Martin and Robert Durant.

Agenda Item I:

Ms. Guiliano led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Item II:

Ms. Guiliano opened the floor for any public comments. There were none.

Agenda Item III:

Recognitions.

Dr. Mercurio and the School Committee awarded certificates of

achievement to the following:

Cole Cross Country - State Champions

EGHS Girls' Soccer - Semi-finals

EGHS Boys' Soccer - State Champions - Division II Varsity

Agenda Item IV:

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Mercurio stated that he would like to publicly note how extra well run the H1N1vaccination clinics were completed. He also wanted to thank Bill Higgins and all the staff and faculty for their hard work and organization of the clinics and the traffic flow. Dr. Mercurio stated that we have two more clinics to go on November 30, 2009 at the High school and on December 10, 2009 at the Middle School.

Dr. Mercurio also reported on the issue of bus safety at the High School during construction. A meeting took place on Friday, November 13, 2009. Those in attendance were Principal of the High School, Jeannine Nota-Masse, the Chief of Police for the Town of East Greenwich, the Deputy of the Fire District for the Town of East Greenwich and Dr. Mercurio. The result of this meeting was a change in the traffic patterns at the High School. Busses will enter normally, take a right and use the side parking lot so they can turn around and then take a left. Parents will use the side entrance into the building. We will have appropriate signage to indicate the new traffic pattern.

Students will not cross into the bus traffic, they will use the side entrance. After hearing what the neighbors had to say it became apparent that their concerns were valid. It was not safe for the students to walk into the oncoming bus traffic. We are looking to rearrange the traffic pattern the day after Thanksgiving. We will be putting the information on the list serve regarding the change in the traffic pattern.

Principal Nota-Masse explained that she and Vice Principal Podraza will communicate with the students who drive to school and the she and Mr. Podraza will be out in the parking lot for the first few days making sure the transition is a smooth one.

Ms. Guliano asked Dr. Mercurio who will have maps next week. Dr. Mercurio responded that he has maps right now provided by Mr. Wilmarth.

There was a motion by Ms. Gifford and seconded by Ms. Winters to accept the Superintendent's report. All approved - motion passed.

Agenda Item V

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Guliano asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Gifford questioned item VII Discussion Items section (e) Subcommittee

Report stating she would set up a meeting with union, union representatives and school committee. She said she does not remember agreeing to do that. Approval of minutes postponed until next meeting.

Agenda Item VI

A. Appointments

1. Christine Shaw, Model Legislature Advisor at the East Greenwich High School.

Motion to approve by Ms. Gifford, seconded by Ms. Winters, motion passed.

B. Out-of-State Field Trips

2. New York City on January 8, 2010 for Middle School students in the Family and Consumer Science Class. Ms. Gifford questioned why are there only nine students going and what is the purpose of the trip. Ms. Elise Wolff addressed the School Committee explaining that there are only nine students in the Family and Consumer Science class. This trip is for the 8th grade class. It is a learning experience. Ms. Wolff stated that she has taken this trip in previous years with the High School class. Ms. Wolff stated that the cost should not be over \$50 per student, but they have not raised the money yet. The trip to New York will be via Amtrack.

3. Higgins Armory Museum in Worcester, MA for Middle School students on December 2, 2009.

A motion to approve was made by Ms. Winters and seconded by Ms. Gifford. Motion carried.

C. Second Reading and vote on Substance Abuse and Suspension Policy.

Ms. Gifford read the draft of the Proposed Addition to the Substance Abuse and Suspension Policy.

Mr. Houghtaling spoke to the questions raised about the proposed additions to the Handbook. He stated that one of the most important things we can do is discipline the students. However, what will be modified the most will be the length of time for the suspension. Currently it is 30 days. What we propose is first offenders will have 15 days of the 30 day sanction. If there is a second offense the 15 days can be added in to the 30 day sanction making it 45 days. This gives a student the chance to learn from their actions.

Dr. Mercurio asked what is the vehicle for communication?

Mr. Houghtaling responded he would be the one to monitor the program and advocate on behalf of the student and a meeting with the student would be the vehicle for tracking.

Dr. Mercurio stated that wording needs to be added for when the student has achieved acceptable behavior and completion.

Ms. Winters queried who will track when the time is completed?

Mr. Houghtaling responded that the tracking is done by the Principal and given to the Athletic Director so that he will be aware the student is again eligible to participate in the athletic programs.

Ms. Winters then asked Ms. Nota-Masse, High School Principal, if she would be doing the tracking of the days. Ms. Winters also stated that this needs to be well-documented.

Ms. Nota-Masse responded that yes she is going to track the days and that she will put the initial amount of 30 days. If the time is completed in 15 days, then Mr. Houghtaling, Ms. Nota-Masse and Mr. Podraza all need to track the time and signoff. The time will be cumulative during the year but will not be carried over from year to year.

Ms. Guliano stated that this item needs to be revisited and the draft

should come back with the following changes: “Completion of the project will be determined by the Administrator.” In addition, the suspension policy was approved back in June by the State. We have to align our language with the language from the State.

D. Assignment of Obligations from Salter Transportation to Ocean State Transportation.

Tabled

E. Fields Project Change Orders.

Tabled

F. Fields Construction Committee Appointments

Tabled

VII Discussion Items

A. Superintendent’s Entry Plan Report Feedback

Dr. Mercurio stated that most of the comments have been positive and that he would like to have a meeting on the Entry Plan Report. He stated that he welcomed the feedback and that this is a very important step.

Ms. Guliano commented that the document is very well done, very thorough, excellent. She did however suggest that page 13 include Town and Policy Departments and the Fire Department.

Ms. Gifford stated she was not sure if it was a first draft or not. Dr. Mercurio state it is the preface to the plan. Part II is the actual plan. Ms. Cienki from the audience asked when the plan was scheduled to be rolled out.

Dr. Mercurio responded that it will not be rolled out until he has at least 2 or 3 people from each school to sit with him and come up with a series of action plans. He said he would like to post this on the website tomorrow.

Item tabled as draft.

B. Fields Project Update

Ms. Guliano stated that over the weekend we had rain and we have signification flooding issues. The field is not draining properly. We have not accepted the fields yet and we are continuing with our attorneys to resolve the issue. We are nearing completion and the School Committee will not be handling the McHail portion. We will meet with the town to negotiate the contracts.

Ms. Gifford and Dr. Mercurio did a “walk through” checking on the condition of the fields. Ms. Gifford asked who did the walk through. Ms. Guliano responded: Dr. Mercurio, Ms. Winters, Mr. DiSaia, and I. We just walked the field. No one from the Town was there.

Ms. Gifford asked Dr. Mercurion to find out from Mr. DiSaia when the punch list will be available. Ms. Records asked if Mr. DiSaia was still on the payroll. Ms. Guliano and Ms. Winters responded that as of December his contract will end.

Mr. Guliano stated we can accept each field separately, i.e. baseball and football.

Mr. Wilmarth stated Parks & Recreation will determine whether or not the baseball field is ready to be played on.

C. UCOA Status and Timeline

Ms. Guliano stated that Mr. Sequino and Ms. Schmidle were not able to come to tonight’s meeting. However, they said they are working on it and they will provide information to us at the next School Committee meeting. Ms. Records asked why we do not have a weekly status. Ms. Guliano stated that Mr. Sequino is working on it and we will have a full update.

D. Building Facilities Use Policy

Ms. Gifford stated she is trying to clarify what category falls into which fee structure. At the end of the policy there is a Fee Structure. We need to clarify the hours and when school is open and when additional support is needed. With regard to charging the Town, Ms. Gifford talked to Mr. Durant and he stated the Town does not charge us so we should not charge the Town. Ms. Guliano stated Mr. Sequino is still looking at it. They will consider charging us for the Eldredge field..

General discussion regarding section 4.20 A: Custodial Fees The facilities Director will respond within 3 weeks addressing the new language and the timing of reservations..

There was also general discussion regarding a fee of an additional \$25.00 being assessed on out of town organizations. Ms. Guliano stated she thought they had agreed earlier this year to charge the extra \$25 fee.

Ms. Gifford recommended that we do not charge the extra \$25 fee because the line between an East Greenwich resident and a non-East Greenwich resident is fuzzy. This is already a complicated process. I am trying to simplify it. If it is non-school, non-East Greenwich rental, we will be charging the \$55.00. We do need to tell the difference between East Greenwich based and non-East Greenwich based.

Ms. Guliano asked if we are an East Greenwich organization, why should we have to pay to use our own buildings. Do we want to charge East Greenwich groups to use our buildings (not including the custodial fee)? In addition Ms. Guliano asked if there is an evening meeting do we get charged for the custodian. Mr. Wilmarth stated that as long as they vacate the building by 8:45 they will not be charged. Ms. Gifford stated that is not the policy. Ms. Guliano stated maybe wording from the Custodial Contract should be put into the policy.

General discussion followed regarding the use of the buildings by Principals or PTG groups, etc. Mr. Wilmarth stated that the Principals etc, do not fill out rental forms and therefore are not charged. Ms. Guliano asked when should the PTG's have to pay for a custodian. Ms. Records asked what happens at the Open Houses. Mr. Wilmarth stated if there is food and/or drinks or large groups such as an Open House, an additional custodian is scheduled. Dr. Mercurio stated that if there are clean-ups that take the regular custodian away from his/her regular duties, then you need to charge. Ms. Guliano "So if someone is having a nighttime meeting and leave

by 8:45 and they have food, should they be charged?" Ms Winters: I think we should stick with the way the policy reads now: "out of the building by 8:45, there is no charge".

Ms. Winters stated that she wanted to know what they are getting charged for. Is it overtime for the custodians? We want a breakdown of the overtime. We do not want to continue to absorb the overtime. Ms. Guliano stated we need to check the Custodian contract to determine whether the custodians are working for two extra hours or four extra hours. Ms. Gifford said she needs to go back to look at the contract. Do we have a consensus charging out of town groups?

Ms. Guliano said she thinks we should charge out of town groups \$80.00 when it is clearly an outside entity. Ms. Gifford questions charging OLM which is in East Greenwich and the Providence CYO. Ms. Palumbo asked what the SAT class was charged. Mr Wilmarth replied they were charged \$5 per hour. Ms. Palumbo reiterated that the PTG does not fill out a rental form for night meetings and would not be charged as long as they vacated the building by 8:45 which is during the custodian's regular hours. Ms. Winters stated she wanted to get to the bottom of the overtime charges and any litigation charges by the custodians. Ms. Gifford reiterated that if you fill out a building rental form, you will get billed for a rental. Ms. Guliano agreed with Ms. Winters that the committee needs to look at the disparities of the overtime charges. Ms. Winters added that we need

to pin down the overtime this year.

Dr. Mercurio stated that he told the PTG that he would work with Mr. Wilmarth and Ms. Crawford to make the billing more advantageous for the PTG. We need to meet collectively to see what we can do. Ms. Guliano suggested billing for each event. Dr. Mercurio stated that they need to meet collectively and talk about this and he would update the PTG after they meet.

E. FY 2011 Budgeting Process

Scheduled were emailed to the School Committee by Ms. Guliano. Dr. Mercurio stated that the Finance Committee is meeting on December 10 and the budget owners will meet again with their assigned people from the Finance Committee. Ms. Guliano stated that last year we had our meetings on the budget in January. We are

looking at cuts of at least \$400,000. If F/Y 2010 is decreased, our budget will be reduced by about \$200,000, so are we going into the new year cutting \$400,000 or \$600,000 based on the 2009 or 2010 budget and state law clarification if your budget is changed mid-year.

I will try to get some clarification. Ms. Gifford added that the School Committee needs to develop a draft recommendation. Dr. Mercurio answered that they have looked at it but do not have any specific recommendations yet. Ms. Guliano stated that Federal money runs out in 2012. Ms. Gifford stated as soon as we can we should put it in writing to the Town and have the Town sign off on the timeline.

F. Regional School Committee Roundtable Priorities

Ms. Guliano stated they have added West Warwick to the group, which currently includes, Chariho, West Kingston and Narragansett. Discussions include the school lunch deficit (which is not unusual). General discussion, what if we go to a bag lunch? We will not be on the hook for that as Aramark will absorb the deficit. Ms. Gifford and Ms. Records queried whether or not we have to pay for the deficit. Ms. Guliano instructed to have the School Lunch issue put back on the agenda for the December 1st meeting.

Other discussions included shared athletic programs, discussion of formats, length of School Committee meetings. The Warwick School District is much larger than ours and the meetings are much shorter. West Warwick has digital meetings on laptops.

Dr. Mercurio stated that First Class is up and he emailed that to all the committee members. We can get all the School Committee documents on First Class. We will now have the ability to share copies and leases, Aesop and School spring, regional contracts, history of negotiations, compensation, IT services agreement, Special Ed, A LP Programs, training and PD schedule, green pages, non-public textbooks, Health Insurance, state-wide initiatives. The Technology Committee is meeting tomorrow and will start writing the technology plan.

G. School Committee Scholarship Discussion - Tabled

VIII. School Committee Concerns

Ms. Records asked why the application to go from Div I to Div II for the Girls Soccer and the Girls Baseball team was denied? She stated that all the rest of the teams are Division II. East Greenwich made an appointment to go down to Div II why was it denied? Dr. Mercurio advised Ms. Records that many factors go into the decision of the divisions. He stated that not only is it the size of the school, but the geography and the competitiveness is also considered. Ms. Records stated that Mr. Varrecchione was involved. Dr Mercurio stated that it is a collective decision and that he will find out for Ms. Records.

Ms. Winters brought up the fact that some of the documents in the packet are for information only and can be distributed electronically. She also questions why the hard copy documents are not double-sided. She also wanted to know what professional development is going on tomorrow. Dr. Mercurio said he will forward a list of Professional Development workshops tomorrow.

Ms. Palumbo stated that RIASC has an electronic policy for free. The catch is if we want to update it the cost is \$150 to update. The Growing Policy and the Health & Wellness policy are separate. Do we want to customize them? Ms. Guliano stated there is a new website now. Ms. Palumbo said she thinks it is great.

Ms. Guliano asked for a motion to go back into Executive Session. Motion made by Ms. Winters and seconded by Ms. Palumbo. Motion carried.

Executive Session opened at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Sharon Taylor

Administrative Assistant